Language of the Land: The Politics of Mapudungun Language Death and Revitalization in Chile

Undergraduate Research Thesis

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by

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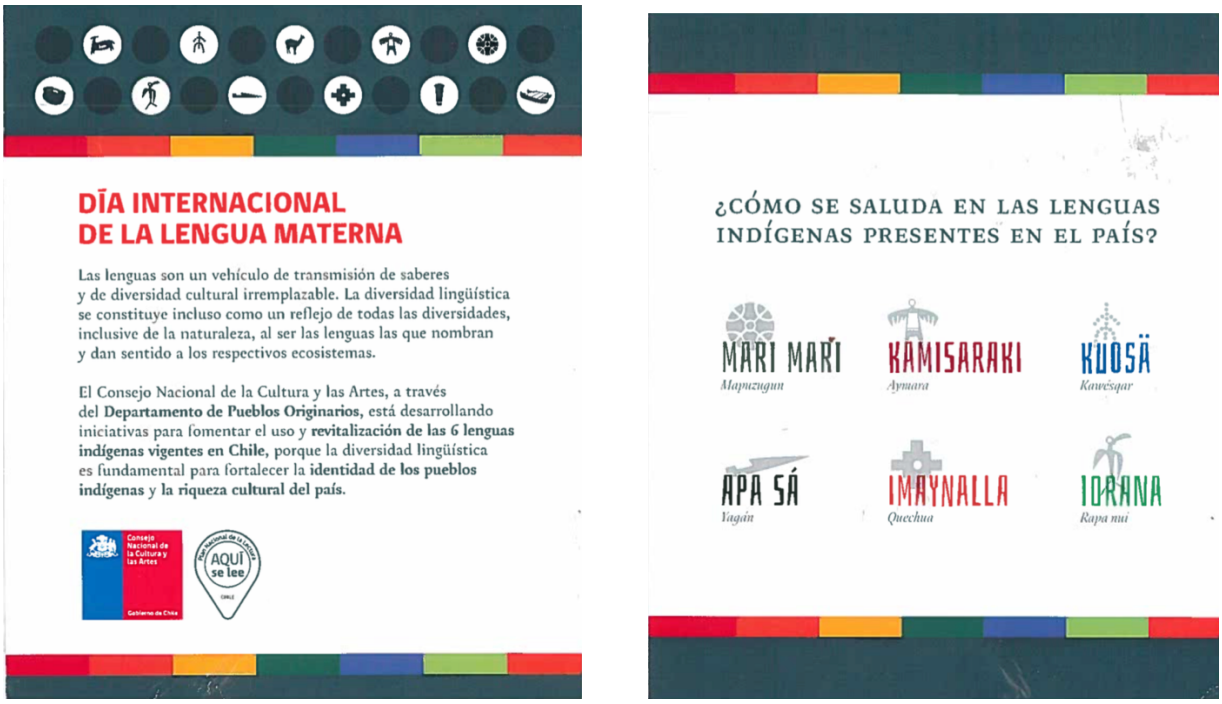
Día Internacional de la Lengua Materna

One hot summer's day, I was making my way down into the Ñuñoa metro station, a stop along Santiago de Chile's brand-new Linea 6, connecting the southwest corner of the city to Providencia, the economic center of the capital. I had just arrived in Santiago after two weeks of spending time in the South of the country with the family of my mother, who herself is Chilean and immigrated to the States after marrying my American father. For at least four generations, and probably more, my mother's family has lived in San Nicolás, a small town historically inhabited primarily by mestizo peasant farmers. I had visited my family various times in the past, and had even lived in Chillán, the closest city to San Nicolás, for two years with my family from 2007-2009. This time, however, I had come to Chile to study for a semester in Valparaíso, a coastal city about an hour and a half outside of Santiago.

The long elevator ride down from street level to the ticketing level slowly brought me within reach of the station's air conditioning, providing respite from the sweltering Chilean sun up above. As I stepped out onto the white porcelain floors of the landing, I came across a small gathering of about thirty people. Among the crowd was a mestizo man with a microphone who seemed to be in charge of the event, as well as several indigenous people in their traditional dress. As I approached the crowd, I was handed a small pamphlet with bold letters in red reading: *Día Internacional de la Lengua Materna* (International Day of the Mother Language). The top of the pamphlet includes various icons, including a llama, a Mapuche *kultrung* (drum), and a Rapa Nui *tangata manu* (birdman), and at the bottom is the insignia for Chile's governmental National Council for Culture and the Arts. The back of the pamphlet reads: *¿Cómo se saluda en las lenguas indígenas presentes en el país?* (How to offer greetings in the indigenous languages present in Chile), along with the greetings of six different indigenous languages.



Día Internacional de la Lengua Materna Pamphlet

As a student of linguistics and culture studies, I was struck by the celebration, initially simply because a state-funded celebration of a UN day promoting linguistic diversity, and specifically indigenous languages, is not something I would ever expect to see in the United States. I left the gathering after about five minutes, since I was heading to meet my study abroad program in Providencia and was a little pressed on time. I departed feeling overall rather pleased with what I had just seen, although there was still a question in my mind about how the whole thing was organized, with the mestizo man running the show and handing off the microphone from time to time to the indigenous people. I went back and forth between interpreting the event as a genuine effort to raise consciousness of languages undergoing attrition and an attempt to spur revitalization efforts, versus one which tokenized indigenous cultures and failed to recognize the state repression of indigenous movements in the south of the country.

As my time in Chile went on, and my knowledge of Chilean internal politics began to expand and deepen, this seed of doubt grew. I began to see more instances of demonstrations by the state indicating their endorsement and support for indigenous "interculturalism" and "linguistic diversity." On the other hand, the south of the country, where the greatest population of the indigenous Mapuche people live, continued to be the site of violent state repression against Mapuche protests calling for land rights in the face of ever-expanding timber plantations and hydroelectric dam developments. It is this contradiction between the state's discourse of interculturalism, diversity, and appreciation for indigenous languages and cultures, and their actions of brutal repression against indigenous movements for material and cultural justice, that this paper intends to examine.

Introduction

Mapudungun, meaning "language of the land," is the language of the Mapuche people, who make up the largest indigenous population in Chile—9.9% of Chileans citizens identify as Mapuche, while about 2.9% of citizens identify with one of Chile's 12 other indigenous groups, including the Aymara and the Diaguita people (Carvajal G. 2018). Mapudungun is facing language death, with only an estimated 250,000 Mapuche people (a total population of around 1,400,000) being able to converse according estimates made in 2016 (Zuñiga and Olate 2017). Historically, the Mapuche people have been marginalized, their culture stigmatized, and their lands forcefully expropriated and exploited, since the Spanish colonization of Chile in the late 16th century and the establishment of the Chilean state in 1818. These prejudices and the internal colonization of the Mapuche people within Chilean borders have continued into the present day. Since the fall of the fascist Pinochet dictatorship in 1989, a regime which set into place neoliberal measures eliminating collective land rights for the Mapuche people, the Chilean state has taken initiatives to celebrate and preserve indigenous languages and culture, often utilizing a discourse of promoting "interculturalism" and "diversity" (Carter 2010). Meanwhile, Chile's governing systems of colonialism and neoliberalism continue to push Mapuche communities off their ancestral lands, and reject their requests to recuperate land usurped during the dictatorship, all in favor of transnational corporations and large land owners. The modern Mapuche movement which emerged during and coming out of the time of Pinochet has put forth both material and cultural demands, and has continually faced brutal repression and surveillance by the government (Fernandez Droguett 2015).

This thesis examines the contradiction between the state's measures to "protect" indigenous culture and "foster diversity," and its otherwise contradictory system of colonialism

and neoliberalism and policies of repression toward the Mapuche people, both historically and against the emergent Mapuche movement. Revitalization efforts have suffered from top-down organization and implementation, and have largely neglected to situate the process of language loss within the context of colonialism and systemic racism. Overall, state-led revitalization efforts have not been robust enough to effectively reverse the process of language shift among the Mapuche people. I argue that these efforts can be understood through Hale's (2002) concept of *neoliberal multiculturalism*, in which states strategically coopt cultural demands put forth by indigenous movements and ignore more substantial material demands in order to advance their neoliberal agenda.

In this thesis, I will first provide a history of the Chilean state's relationship with the Mapuche people, particularly noting how some of the state's actions and discourse have affected Mapudungun. I will then review scholarship on the state of Mapudungun and some of the revitalization efforts that have been implemented by the state, followed by a discussion on the challenges facing language revitalization and potential ways forward. I will chart the emergence of the contemporary Mapuche movement, which has linked their loss of language and culture to material dispossession. I then argue that the Chilean state's emphasis on indigenous interculturalism and diversity through cultural promotion initiatives, such as language revitalization programs, demonstrate a clear example of neoliberal multiculturalism. To do this, I will contrast one example of state-led language revitalization efforts with one organized by grassroots Mapuche activists and educators. I argue that the state-led effort removes discussions of colonialism and racism from the project of language revitalization, and instead uses their promotion of indigenous languages to support their ongoing colonial and neoliberal projects in the South of Chile, which are directly responsible for the maintenance of systems of oppression and

exploitation of the indigenous people of Chile. Meanwhile, the grassroots example has framed the project of language revitalization as an explicitly political one, challenging the hegemonic systems of colonialism and neoliberalism in Chile. Thus, the project signals toward the potential language revitalization has to act as an entry point for anti-neoliberal politics and organizing.

Chapter I: Historical Context

The Mapuche people are often said to be the indigenous group in Latin America who most successfully staved off the encroachment of the conquistadors during the period of Spanish colonization of the Americas. The Mapuche maintained relative autonomy from the European settlers until the Chilean state, which gained its independence in 1818, began its "Pacification" campaign in 1883, violently seizing indigenous land and promoting the establishment of settlements by both Chileans and European immigrants (Carter 2010). Since this time, the Mapuche people have been marginalized, their culture stigmatized, and their lands forcefully expropriated and exploited, and this process has continued almost uninterrupted into the present day.

With the establishment of the independent Chilean state, the Mapuche were recognized as Chileans, with "equal voice and representation, just as any other citizen, and free to enter into contracts, defend their interests, and select their profession according to their wishes and abilities" (Gallegos 2010). This liberal discourse of nationhood intended to erase the existence of indigenous people, naturalizing and legitimizing the process of internal colonialism through the ideology of modernization. "*El pueblo Mapuche*" as a concept relegated the Mapuche to the past, admiring them for their legendary nobility, strength, and courage as warriors. Meanwhile, contemporary ideologies painted their descendants as lazy and uneducated drunkards in need of civilizing (Brown 1995).

The *Pacificación* policies established a system of pushing the Mapuche onto *reducciones*, or reserves, separate from the settlements being established by Chilean and European colonists. By 1920, the Mapuche had been pushed onto 6.4% of their traditional territory (Parks and Richards 2007). The displacement of the Mapuche made it difficult if not impossible for them to continue

their cultural practices on ancestral lands. At the same time, the *reducciones* became socially and economically isolated from the rest of Chilean society, actually creating the conditions for the maintenance of Mapudungun among these Mapuche communities. This same process of colonialism that led to language maintenance, however, also linked Mapudungun to a status of economic deprivation and social isolation, as the Mapuche became continually poorer relative to non-native Chileans by being forced onto smaller and less fertile plots of land.

The discourse assuming that the Mapuche people were destined to disappear through this process of "pacification," civilization, and modernization brought on by European settlement, was so powerful that many Mapuche organizations in the early 20th century aimed to facilitate the process of assimilation by advocating for paternalistic policies towards this end (Crow 2010). On the other hand, inclusion of the Mapuche people within the emergent capitalist system in Chile was never realized nor possible. As Chile's military conquests forced the Mapuche off their land to make way for settlers, many were pushed to migrate to urban areas where they became workers, but occupied the lowest rung of this class (Carter 2010). They were discriminated against for being poor and indigenous, and barred from integrating economically by virtue of being unable to speak Spanish and illiterate (Vicente Mariqueo 1979). As a result of social and economic alienation, many urban Mapuche communities prohibited the speaking of Mapudungun (Gallegos 2010).

The democratic socialist presidency of Salvador Allende from 1970-1973 as part of the Popular Unity (UP) coalition was the culmination of years of grassroots organizing by the Chilean working class and peasantry. The Mapuche saw notable gains in land and cultural rights. They recuperated over 700,000 hectares of land during this time, much of which they expropriated through extra-parliamentary means and which were later sanctioned by the UP government. Law 17.729, created with input from Mapuche leaders and community members, called for land

redistribution and government subsidies towards healthcare, education, and social programs. The provision of material resources to alleviate economic burdens allowed Mapuche communities to spend time and resources developing Mapuche education, and the establishment of a Directorate of Indigenous Affairs allowed the creation of intercultural health centers and schools to integrate Mapudungun and Mapuche cultural values into these social institutions (Gallegos 2010). During this time, many Mapuche organized alongside Chilean mestizo peasants and workers, and oftentimes did not necessarily see themselves as having a distinct indigenous identity; rather, their shared experience of exploitation formed the basis of their solidarity. (Even so, it is worth noting here that Mapuche organizers of this period experienced racist discrimination by those of the traditional left parties and the extra-parliamentary left, a fact which I shall expand upon later.)

These advances were quickly reversed after a CIA-backed coup in 1973 put into place the fascist dictatorship headed by Augusto Pinochet. The regime tortured and murdered thousands of leftist and indigenous political organizers, and introduced neoliberal measures eliminating collective land rights for the Mapuche. The Mapuche were quickly left with 16% of the land they had regained during the UP years (Richards 2013). State policy instituted a marked shift away from classifying the Mapuche as peasants, casting them as individuals rather than part of a larger social group or class. The regime instituted a number of socially regressive laws in the name of national security and prosperity. These laws eliminated social programs and necessitated the creation of a homogenous national population to facilitate the shift to a neoliberal society dominated by unregulated free markets and the privatization of all facets of social life. Law 2.568, titled *For the Indian, Indian lands, the Division of the Reducciones and the Liquidation of the Indian Communities,* declared that "there are no indigenous people in Chile," prohibited communal land use, and divided up Mapuche land, clearing the way for private development. Further, Decree

Law 701, signed in 1974, subsidized timber plantations on former Mapuche land (Carruthers and Rodriguez 2009). Once the land had been divided, it was legally no longer indigenous, nor were its inhabitants. By declaring the non-existence of the Mapuche as a people, the regime denied them a basis on which to demand collective rights and reparations for their long history of colonial dispossession.

Pinochet's continual portrayal of the Mapuche as a minority seeking preferential treatment painted them as a threat to national security and social harmony, and sought to lodge a wedge between them and the rest of Chilean society. These tactics were intended to justify the disappearances and murders of over 300 Mapuche at the hands of the regime (Gallegos 2010). The result of the repression and discrimination faced by the Mapuche was two-sided: in many cases, the Mapuche rejected their culture, heritage, and language; in others, repression catalyzed the creation of a distinct "Mapuche identity," which formed as a foundation for indigenous solidarity and resistance against the regime. According to Carter (2010), this was "reflected in the birth of new cultural organizations that simultaneously revived Mapuche culture and defended communities against Pinochet's land division policy." Mapuche organizations such as *Ad Mapu* were overtly cultural organizations with underlying politics resistant to the regime. They carried out tactics such as letter writings, petitions, press communiqués, as well as peaceful land occupations and May Day marches, even when trade unions and labor movements failed to mobilize (Carter 2010).

After the fall of the dictatorship in 1989, many Mapuche political leaders displayed a willingness to work with the *Concertación*, the coalition of center-left parties elected into leadership with the "return to democracy." However, the *Concertación*'s commitment to maintaining the neoliberal order established during the dictatorship quickly became apparent.

Their policies emphasized private initiative, efficiency, and competitiveness, and their practices delegitimized and criminalized social movements by painting them as chaotic and deconstructive (Kowalczyk 2013). As Robison (2008) states, "Chile is the first country to have started neoliberal restructuring and globalization, and it is probably the 'purest' neoliberal republic in the hemisphere in terms of its level of integration into global markets, de-regulation, privatization, domination by private capital, the atomization of the working class, and the hegemony of neoliberal ideology and global capitalist culture."

Indeed, the center-left has maintained Pinochet's 1980 constitution, despite having promised to replace it— a red flag indicating the *Concertación*'s unwillingness to dismantle the foundational tenets of neoliberalism and elitist, vertical forms of governance in Chile. The persistence of mass movements among various social sectors, including students, labor unions, and the Mapuche, provide evidence for widespread discontent with neoliberal policies under the *Concertación*. In fact, these movements have been most combative even under President Michele Bachelet (2006-2010 & 2014-2018), a centrist democratic socialist representing the most left-leaning iteration of the *Concertación*'s administration. Bachelet's time in office oversaw the most killings of Mapuche people by the police since the time of Pinochet, and implemented steadfast repression of political movements with the use of water cannons, tear gas, and beatings.

The *Concertación* has passed various nominally progressive reforms with respect to the Mapuche. Policies such as the Indigenous Act of 1993, for example, have taken measures towards "the recognition, respect, and protection of indigenous cultures and languages" (Ley 19,253; 1993). The Ministry of Education and CONADI (National Bureau for Indigenous Development) are the two national Chilean departments that have overseen policies for promotion and revitalization of indigenous languages in Chile. The Bilingual Intercultural Education Programs

(EIB), established in the early 90s, comprise one such initiative, and coordinate programs supporting intercultural education in schools with high indigenous populations (Loncon 2017). Today, schools with EIB programs exist at the pre-school, primary and secondary levels. As I will discuss later, scholars who have studied these reforms doubt that they have been robust enough to actually reverse the process of language shift among the Mapuche people.

CONADI as a whole has exhibited an indisputable pattern of supporting indigenous rights only when these are not in conflict with powerful economic interests. In the words of the Mapuche organization Coordinadora de Comunidades en Conflicto Arauco-Malleco, "In view of the conflicts for lands, the State privileges the political economic interests, that is, it will do all it can to maintain political stability and economic growth, even at the expense of sacrificing the Mapuche people" (CAM 2004). For example, CONADI has supported the building of hydroelectric dams on indigenous territory despite widespread opposition and protest among Mapuche activists and environmentalists, and in violation of the Indigenous Law of 1993 as well as the International Law of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (Kowalcyk 2013). The development of hydroelectric dams and the continued expansion of the forestry industry, still subsidized by the government, have displaced Mapuche families and prevented families from re-appropriating ancestral lands from these corporations (Carruthers and Rodriguez 2009).

Additionally, the economic and social situation of the Mapuche has in no way seen substantial progress. As a UN "Special Rapporteur on adequate housing" document indicates, indigenous people in Chile today are almost twice as likely as the average citizen of Chile to be poor. As a result of a long history of discriminatory policies and practices, Mapuche housing standards are lower than those of average Chileans, giving rise to overcrowding, precarious tenure, lack of access to water, and general discrimination. The government-sponsored forestry industry's

expansion has pushed many indigenous people onto lands unsuitable for human habitation, signaling that the contemporary poverty and dispossession of indigenous communities in Chile is a direct consequence of the state's neoliberal policies, falling in line with its history of colonialism.

The Mapuche have also continued to experience police brutality and disproportionate levels of incarceration since the return to democracy. State violence is especially used to repress Mapuche struggles for land rights in the south of Chile. Bachelet's supposedly socially-progressive administration became infamous for its use of Pinochet's still-existent *Ley Anti-Terrorista* (Anti-Terrorist Law) to target, criminalize, and severely punish political leaders of these movements without due process (Fernandez Droguett 2015). The Mapuche movement that has emerged since the fall of the dictatorship has been one of the most combative movements against Chile's neoliberal policies today, protesting specifically against mega-development projects in the hydroelectric and forestry industries. These protests have included marches, sit-ins, property invasions and occupations, equipment sabotage, legal challenges, and confrontations with political parties and leaders (Carruthers and Rodriguez 2009).

Chapter II: Language Death, Revitalization, and the State of Mapudungun

In this chapter, I will elaborate on Mapudungun's language vitality and its recent trends of language shift. Despite positive attitudes by the Mapuche towards Mapudungun, the language has experienced a process of language shift and attrition which marks it an endangered language. To reverse this, Mapudungun will require a vigorous revitalization program. While the Chilean government has claimed their support of indigenous cultural rights and language education, state-led Mapudungun language education efforts have not been comprehensive and have suffered from top-down planning and execution, leading to overall ineffectiveness.

Mapudungun Language Ideologies

The Mapuche have long been stereotyped by two seemingly contradictory images that remain in tension—on the one hand, they have been portrayed as noble, courageous warriors in their resistance to Spanish colonization and later the Chilean state; on the other hand, the Mapuche have been portrayed as a drunken and lazy people (Brown 1995). Brown (1995) discusses language ideologies surrounding Mapudungun among the Mapuche at the time of his study. He cites various previous studies describing the phenomenon of Mapuche youth leaving their communities to migrate to the urban sphere, and consequently abandoning Mapuche self-identification through the process of assimilation, a phenomenon that has occurred all over Latin America.

Brown also cites studies that have in fact found enthusiasm and pride among the Mapuche for their language and culture, although he recognizes that "good intentions do not necessarily mean action," and that such attitudes are often found in other situations of language loss. His argument is ultimately that despite positive attitudes toward a particular language or culture, the survival of these is unlikely unless they undergo public diffusion, "helped by radio and TV as well as legislation which makes bilingual education possible."

Today, language attitudes toward Mapudungun are incredibly positive among Mapuche people. Zuñiga and Olate's recent (2017) study on the current state of Mapudungun shows that there are certainly differences among the Mapuche in ideas about what it means to "maintain Mapuche culture," and what constitutes "Mapuche identity." Generally, practices like maintaining traditional modes of agriculture, living in a Mapuche community, participating in cultural customs and traditional rituals, and even maintaining ethnic homogeneity do not hold much importance, according to the data. However, speaking the language is actually identified as being important for the maintenance of Mapuche culture and for defining Mapuche identity. Of those surveyed in a 2016 CEP (Center for Public Research) Mapuche survey, 58% percent said that Mapudungun is the most important element of Mapuche identity and 60% stated that Mapudungun education should be mandatory for Mapuche children (Loncon 2017). Despite these positive attitudes toward Mapudungun, language attrition continues, a fact which I will detail in the following section.

Measuring Language Vitality

Although scholars of sociolinguistics have been interested in the question of language shift and maintenance since the emergence of the discipline, a particular interest in the question of revitalization did not emerge until the 1990s, with the recognition of the alarming rate at which many of the world's languages are becoming endangered (Hornberger 1995). Around this time, various frameworks for measuring language vitality were developed. These have differed on a number of different levels, including the factors taken into account for measurement, depth of descriptions, and the objectives behind measurement (Chen 2016). The early models for vitality measurement focused on intergenerational transmission, including only a few levels of vitality, and not fully drawing out the nuances between these levels.

Since this time, a variety of other scales have been developed in an attempt to address the

diverse and complex dynamics surrounding language maintenance, shift, and prospects for revitalization. The Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), developed by Fishman in 1991, for example, was a groundbreaking and foundational scale for assessing a language's place on the scale of shift versus maintenance. This scale is primarily based on intergenerational transmission of a language and how it is used in particular domains. A framework for how to go about revitalization for a language, a process called "reversing language shift" by Fishman, is inherent to the scale—language activists can work on raising the language's place on the scale by increasing its domain of use to the next level on the scale (Chen 2016). The UNESCO Language Vitality and Endangerment Scale was developed by the UNESCO Experts Meeting on Safeguarding Endangered Languages, and is a more holistic approach to assessing language vitality as well as the causes of language shift, with the goal of assessing the need and urgency of language documentation. Its primary focus, therefore, is on detailing factors of language endangerment (Chen 2016). Landweer's Ethnolinguistic Vitality Scale was developed to account specifically for languages of particular ethnic groups, and was utilized by Zuñiga and Olate in their 2007 and 2017 studies of Mapudungun, which I will summarize below.

The various linguistic vitality scales vary in detail, account for different factors, and have different aims underlying measurement. What is important to note, as the authors of the UNESCO-LVE assert, is that while intergenerational transmission is the "central index of language vitality," the transmission of a language is itself determined by other factors. In other words, intergenerational transmission assessment indicates where the language is on the scale of vitality, while other factors can explain the why and the how. It is therefore important to consider in depth a wide range of factors in determining the vitality of a language, and the steps needed to improve the likelihood of language maintenance.

The State of Mapudungun

The most comprehensive recent assessment and analysis of the state of Mapudungun was conducted by Zuñiga and Olate (2017). The authors apply Landweer's Ethnolinguistic Vitality Scale to data from the 2016 CEP (Center for Public Research) Mapuche survey, which was conducted by interviewing 1,493 rural and urban Mapuche people (Centro de Estudios Públicos 2016). The paper compares these findings to a paper published by Zuñiga (2007) ten years earlier on the state of Mapudungun based on a 2006 survey. The authors generally describe Mapudungun as having an interrupted generational transmission, but with an older generation which can still speak the language, such that revitalization efforts could eventually reestablish the transmission of the language in the home. Despite significantly positive attitudes towards Mapudungun by the Mapuche overall, and a nation-wide increase in the social prestige of Mapudungun, use of the language continues to decline. The results are summarized for each factor in Landweer's EVS as follows.

(1) Potential for contact (referring to the distance and accessibility to places where the community is exposed to, and sometimes required to use, other languages, and especially taking into account the rural-urban divide): Mapudungun was found to be used in urban areas and the periphery, and while use of Mapudungun in urban areas had seemed to be on the rise in 2006, it has since lost ground. An analysis on the differences between urban and rural use of Mapudungun is included by Zuñiga separately from this scale.

(2) Domains of use (referring to the different social environments in which the language is spoken, including public and private, formal and informal domains): Spanish has become a mode of communication within Mapuche communities, and while Mapudungun is taught in the home, it is seen as more functional with community matters than with "modern affairs."

(3) Diglossia and codeswitching (viewing codeswitching as "ethnolinguistic ambivalence" as proposed by Meyers-Scotton (1995)): researchers found a large amount of codeswitching in various domains, including territorial and community "geosociocultural" spaces, and no clear situation of diglossia. The authors suggest that this indicates a high level of ethnolinguistic ambivalence.

(4) Population and group dynamic (referring to the presence or absence of a critical mass of speakers): the Chilean settler-colonial and mestizo population maintains their Spanish language, and insists on it being spoken to them, neglecting to learn the minority language of Mapudungun.

(5) Social networks (referring to the density and multiplexity of Milroy's (1982) concept of social networks): the researchers report dense social networks, especially in rural areas, that are open to and in communication with Spanish-speaking communities. Rather than reinforcing use of Mapudungun, however, factors (2) and (3) indicate that Spanish is the preferred language even within these dense network communities both in rural and urban areas.

(6) Social outlook (referring to the perception speakers have of their communities): the Mapuche place great value on speaking Mapudungun, both for maintaining their culture and in constituting Mapuche identity.

(7) Prestige (nationally, regionally, locally, and within the community): prestige of Mapudungun has increased within the past 20 years in political, official, and academic realms, due in part to measures such as the 1993 *Ley Indígena*—the authors note, however, that attributing value to a language does not always translate to taking concrete action toward its revitalization.

(8) Access to stable economic base (referring to the extent to which a language allows participation in the economy): the authors name the political and economic repression the Mapuche people have been subjected to since the colonization of Chile in the 16th century as the defining

factor cementing their relative poverty and lack of social capital relative to non-native Chileans. There is thus little objective basis for learning Mapudungun to increase socio-economic mobility.

In addition, the authors expound on three other areas—value, policy, and use— in which to consider differences between the rural and urban Mapuche communities. With regard to value of Mapudungun, the authors found that in urban areas, a positive value is given to Mapudungun, while in rural areas, Spanish is revered as a mode of communication facilitating social access, mobility, and promotion. With respect to use, in the urban sphere there have been initiatives to introduce Mapudungun to "urban," "modern" contexts. In the rural sector, urbanization has caused Spanish and Mapudungun to come into greater contact with one another, resulting in Spanish becoming the more commonly used language among all parties, and many domains in which Mapudungun used to predominate have switched to Spanish. Finally, the authors indicate that the regional and local sociolinguistic complexity of policy around Mapudungun is not yet completely understood on a comprehensive level, even as local and regional politicians, activists, and organizations are pushing for official status and revitalization of Mapudungun (Zuñiga 2017).

The quantitative data collected by the CEP and analyzed by Zuñiga and Olate paint a dim picture for the trajectory of Mapudungun's vitality. The number of Mapuche people who speak Mapudungun daily in rural areas has dropped in the past decade (down from 31.5% in 2006 to 21.6% in 2016), and use of Mapudungun for "special occasions" (i.e. traditional ceremonies) is in decline in both urban and rural populations. Meanwhile, the number of Mapuche people who speak no Mapudungun whatsoever is increasing—the number has increased since 2006 from 31.5% to 45.7% among urban population, and from 15.7% to 31.4% among the rural population. Generational transmission of Mapudungun occurs at alarmingly low rates in both urban and rural communities—the data show that 4.9% of urban Mapuche people surveyed speak Mapudungun

with their children, and only 13.6% of rural Mapuche do. The data among the rural population are especially indicative of Mapudungun's low and declining vitality, as numbers are not only low, but have dropped since 2006. The authors conclude that the language vitality of Mapudungun has only become more tenuous in the ten years since Zuñiga's (2007) study, and warn that language death is imminent if robust and intensive action is not taken soon (Zuñiga and Olate 2017).

Challenges and ways forward

In 1996, Chile's Ministry of Education passed the *Programa de Educación Intercultural-Bilingüe* (PEIB), as mandated by the *Ley Indígena,* to coordinate intercultural education curriculum in schools (Loncon 2011B). PEIB funds Bilingual Intercultural Education programs for schools with an indigenous population exceeding 20%. Schools with an indigenous population of less than this percentage are permitted to have EIB programs, but are not funded by the Ministry of Education. EIB programs include indigenous language education structured much like second language education, rather than full bilingual immersion. Schools with EIB programs follow a model of "Dual Pedagogy," with indigenous language classes taught by "Traditional Educators" who are native speakers of the language. The Ministry of Education has provided Traditional Educators with professional development resources and materials for Mapuche language and cultural education. As of 2017, 1468 schools are designated EIB schools in Chile (Loncon 2017).

Despite the measures the Chilean state has taken to revitalize Mapudungun, most scholars agree that these are not nearly enough to reverse language shift. Mapuche scholar Elisa Loncon Antileo (2017) gives multiple reasons for this. Firstly, EIB programs are only funded in places with a high percentage of indigenous population. Indigenous populations in urban areas, which make up 75% of the Mapuche population, are therefore largely excluded from the program since they make up a small minority of the urban population.

Apart from the exclusion of urban Mapuche that this policy produces, Loncón criticizes the segregation of Mapudungun language education in Chile along indigenous/Chilean mestizo lines. "Intercultural" bilingual education programs have turned out to be less intercultural in practice than in theory, as they do not promote cultural dialogue between different cultures. She argues that if Mapudungun were taught as a second language to every student in Chile, the benefits of bilingualism would be better understood, leading to a greater value attributed to Mapuche identity and culture in the education system and in broader society. Crucially, Loncon cites the discriminatory and colonial character of linguistic and educational policies applied to Mapudungun. Rather than definitions of "interculturalism" that don't question the dominant structures of capitalism and colonialism, notions of interculturalism must be analyzed from a critical, de-colonial perspective emanating from local indigenous experiences and movements. She argues that indigenous language education must be committed to raising antiracist political and cultural consciousness (Loncon 2011A).

Loncon also points out that the EIB programs are extremely limited in intensity, with students only receiving three hours of Mapudungun instruction per week. Indigenous languages in general will have to be seen as modern and multifunctional languages in academia, cultural life, the media, and public administration in order for them to retain their vitality (Loncon 2017). Counter-posing the lack of value placed on indigenous language education in comparison to English language education, she asserts that the learning of any language can increase the linguistic competency of all persons, increasing communicative competencies, expanding cultural horizons, and lowering anxieties with regard to different languages, among other things.

One of the major factors troubling Mapudungun language revitalization efforts is a top-down approach to policy. The state institutions established by policies claiming to protect and

promote indigenous language and culture have in fact excluded the Mapuche from their formulation, resulting in overwhelming ineffectiveness (Gallegos 2010). The 2008 General Education Law in Chile, a reform resulting from the 2006 secondary education student movements known as the *Revolución Pingüino*, which called for increased quality of education, provides an example of this. Many demands put forth by the Mapuche were kept out of the law, including (i) intercultural education for all, (ii) bilingual education for all indigenous children, (iii) indigenous participation in the National Council for Education (CNE) (Loncon 2017).

Such a contradiction between the purported goals of indigenous policy, and the ineffective, often harmful reality of these policies, is not surprising. Gallegos (2010), for example, notes that in carrying out fieldwork in Chile, her research yielded a "discrepancy between official government documents claiming successful promotion of Mapuche values – including revitalisation of Mapudungun – and societal realities of Mapuche living in rural areas of Chile's IX Region."

Moving forward, in order to stop and reverse the process of Mapudungun language death, Loncon suggests that any education, cultural, and linguistic policies should have the explicit aim of increasing the number of speakers of Mapudungun in urban and rural areas. Further, policies should not simply address the infringement of indigenous rights in Chile, but actively counteract the institutional and societal racism underlying the devaluation of indigenous people and culture. Linguistic policy should value plurilingualism and the collective rights of indigenous people, and intercultural bilingual education programs should be strengthened and made a component of the national education system as a whole. Finally, she and other scholars suggest the establishment of educational and cultural programs where Mapudungun is used hegemonically, including Mapuche language schools, Mapudungun radio and television programs, etc. (Loncon 2017; Brown 1995).

Conclusions

There is clearly consensus among scholars that the death of Mapudungun is fast approaching, and that this process will continue unless serious action with the explicit intention of stopping and reversing the shift is undertaken. The question remains, what will this require?

Certainly, the Chilean state's celebratory discourse of "intercultural diversity" does not match the continued land expropriations, and the repression of the Mapuche people as they protest dispossession and racialized oppression—violations that have taken place under both center-left and right-wing parties since the fall of the dictatorship (Fernández Droguett 2015). This discourse echoes Heller's (2010) claim that "countries formerly concentrated on building their own monolingual nation-states now explore a variety of ways of promoting multilingualism," developing "commodifiable local or regional authenticities." What she calls the commodification of language is a struggle "to preserve neocolonial relations on new grounds… reframed as collaborative rather than hierarchical." Heller's paper examines the commodification of language as technical skills and signs of authenticity adding value for niche markets. The meek revitalization efforts by the Chilean state, combined with its otherwise contradictory policies of repression toward the Mapuche people, both historically and against the emergent Mapuche movement, indicate a similar ideology of language as commodity. I will discuss the implications of this in the following section.

The case of the Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, provides an interesting perspective on courses of action language revitalization activists can take. These strategies have included putting pressure on the state for robust and effective indigenous linguistic and cultural revitalization policy, and grassroots initiatives establishing spaces for the practice and propagation of indigenous culture and language (Boshier 2015; Gallegos 2010). In the case of the Maori and

their language *te reo*, language revitalization demands, spearheaded by self-educated and university intellectuals, became connected to land struggles against the state in the 1970's (Boshier 2015). Nation-wide marches, petitions, and direct-action tactics for land recuperation and Maori education reforms yielded the Maori Language Act of 1987, which declared *te reo* an official language and established the Maori Language Commission, with the purpose of implementing policies for the revitalization of *te reo* (Gallegos 2010).

Language activists also took up the task of revitalization beyond institutional routes sanctioned by the government. Grassroots activists organized *te kohanga reo* (infant language nests) and *kura kuapapa* (Maori immersion primary schools), which were founded outside the state education system, and in which children learn *te reo*, and Maori songs, games, and other cultural practices. Since their founding in 1982 and 1987 respectively, the New Zealand government has granted support to these schools, and tertiary Maori institutions have been established through similar grassroots efforts. Although the survival of *te reo* is far from assured, the process of revitalization is certainly underway through immersion programs, anti-assimilation education policies, and the creation of Maori television and radio broadcasts, promoting the use of *te reo* in formal, informal, and non-formal settings (Boshier 2015).

Similarly, as discussed previously, cultural reforms under Allende were developed by the Mapuche themselves, and accompanied the most comprehensive land redistribution program in Chile's history. As Nettle and Romaine (2000) write, "a community of people can exist only where there is a viable environment for them to live in, and a means of making a living. Where communities cannot thrive, their languages are in danger." If there is anything to be learned from the case of Maori revitalization, which has been comparatively successful thus far, and the short-lived but notable gains achieved by the Mapuche under the Allende presidency in the early 1970's,

it is that forced assimilation and the dispossession of land of indigenous people have historically gone hand in hand, and that one cannot be separated from the other in movements against each of these injustices.

Scholars make the argument that language revitalization is a task requiring the participation and investment of the society as a whole, rather than simply the marginalized group (Zuñiga and Olate 2017; Boshier 2015). The Unidad Popular and Maori cases also exemplify that state reforms intending to reverse dispossession of indigenous land and language constitute concessions won by movements of the indigenous people and their allies through grassroots organizing. These grassroots efforts, therefore, are crucial for the revitalization of indigenous languages. Authors have noted the hostile position the Mapuche have more recently adopted toward the traditional left in Chile, citing betrayals against the Mapuche people by Left party leaders and anti-indigenous racism (Guillaume 2006; Carter 2010). However, if grassroots efforts are necessary for the protection and reclamation of indigenous land and language, they must be organized in coalition with the broader Chilean popular classes, who must reject the system of colonialism and racism in Chile and commit to fighting against it. Indeed, as Carter shows, the Mapuche have historically seen the greatest gains in land re-appropriation in times when they've organized in alliance with the Chilean working class and peasantry during the time of the Popular Unity government—both through parliamentary reforms and extra-parliamentary, illegal land occupations.

These works begin to indicate that Mapudungun revitalization policies have rested comfortably within the confines of the Chilean state's systems of internal colonialism and neoliberalism, and have overall been ineffective. In the following section, I will discuss the purpose cultural demands have served in a movement which arose to protest material dispossession, racialized oppression, and state repression against the Mapuche. I will further

discuss how the Chilean state's insufficient revitalization efforts, despite their vocal commitment to the project, can be understood through the concept of neoliberal multiculturalism.

Chapter III: The Politics of Identity, Culture, and Language Revitalization

In mid-December of 2018, I arrived in Chile at the height of civil unrest following the murder of Camilo Catrillanca by *Carabinero's de Chile*, Chile's national police force, in Chile's southern *Región de la Araucanía*— the 16th murder of a Mapuche person by the *Carabineros* since the fall of the dictatorship. Catrillanca was a Mapuche land recuperation activist and the grandson of *longko* (Mapuche political and social leader) Juan Catrillanca. He had also been a local leader in the nation-wide high school student movement of 2011, through which his local high school had achieved their demands to create a local intercultural high school and to increase scholarship opportunities for students ("Quién era Camilo Catrillanca"). Catrillanca had been with a 15-year-old boy at the time of his murder, who was subsequently arrested and tortured in detention according to Chile's National Institute of Human Rights (Batarce 2018).

Following the shooting, the *Carabineros* alleged that Catrillanca had stolen three vehicles, which was never proved to be true. The *Carabineros* also insisted that there were no videos capturing the incident, but it was later discovered that there had in fact been multiple video recordings that had all been destroyed by the officers involved. The officers who committed these infractions were members of the *Comando Jungla*, a division of the *Carabineros* tasked with "security reinforcement" in the southern region who are equipped with advanced military technology and trained in Colombia and the United States ("¿Qué es el Comando Jungla…?").

The murder of Catrillanca incited a wave of protests across the country, with Mapuche activists as well as social and political organizations taking to the streets to demand justice and the demilitarization of Chile's *Región de la Araucanía*. The peaceful protests were met with staunch repression by the *Carabineros*, who used *guanacos* (water cannons) and tear gas to disperse the crowds. These protests nonetheless managed to force Chile's right-wing president Sebastián Piñera

to call for the resignation of the General Director of the *Carabineros*, Hermes Soto, amidst the wider context of their *Operación Huracán*, which was found to have manipulated data and falsified evidence to incriminate members of Mapuche communities resisting development by multinational corporations and fighting for land recuperation ("¿Por qué el Estado Chileno persigue al pueblo Mapuche?")

As Fernandez-Droguett (2015) discusses, the state has increased surveillance and repression of indigenous resistance since the return to democracy, and has directly targeted and legally persecuted Mapuche political leaders, criminalizing protests as "terrorist activities." The murder of Camilo Catrillanca is one of many instances of police violence against political self-organization of the Mapuche in southern Chile.

Clearly, there are two easily identifiable and seemingly opposed attitudes and actions by the Chilean State with regard to the Mapuche people. On the one hand, the State has promoted abstract concepts of "diversity" and "interculturalism" by implementing certain cultural reforms, including Mapudungun language education policies; on the other, the State has continued to institute policies favoring transnational corporations over Mapuche interests, has heavily militarized Mapuche communities in the South, and brutally represses peaceful protests against these actions. As I will argue, the adoption of nominal support and promotion of Mapuche cultural identity, while rejecting more fundamental reforms aimed at economic and political restructuring so that the Mapuche can be empowered to organize collectively and determine their own futures, can be understood as an instance of "neoliberal multiculturalism."

Neoliberal Multiculturalism

The latest iteration of internal colonialism against the Mapuche is comprised of Chile's adoption of free market, or neoliberal, economic policies. These policies have opened land

historically belonging to the Mapuche for privatization and development by transnational corporations, notably timber companies, which received 75-100% direct government funding during the dictatorship and continue to be favored by the state (Carruthers and Rodriguez 2009). This privatized land has largely been used for the production of pine and eucalyptus, which are water-intensive crops that cause long-term droughts and the depletion of nutrients of the soil, posing an alarming threat to the native flora and fauna and the agricultural communities that surround the area.

The loss of land has not only threatened the material subsistence of the Mapuche people, however. It has also constituted a loss of space in which Mapuche knowledge, values, customs— and language— can be kept alive. The recognition that loss of land constitutes loss of culture has caused indigenous people worldwide, including the Mapuche, to shift from simply putting forth material demands for adequate living and farming spaces, to asserting the right to a cultural space (Carter 2010). However, cultural demands, such as promotion of language and culture, have often been taken up by state reforms in isolation from more fundamental demands which call for a restructuring of political and economic relations between the state and indigenous people, like colonial reparations, land redistribution, and the recognition of collective land rights. The recent trend of states strategically initiating reforms for the promotion of multiculturalism, while systematically continuing to usurp indigenous lands for capitalist development, has been analyzed under the name of "neoliberal multiculturalism" (Hale 2002).

As Parks and Richards (2007) summarize, scholars have explained in various ways the recent acknowledgement and implementation by Latin American states of indigenous rights and reforms. Brysk (2000) sees indigenous gains as a logical consequence of the broader process of Latin American democratization, following the fall of authoritarian regimes across the region,

while Yashar (1999) argues that indigenous resistance movements reacting to neoliberal cutbacks are primarily responsible for government concessions. Van Cott (1994, 2000) argues that states view indigenous movements as threatening, and therefore practice inclusion of indigenous people and the implementation of multicultural policies to achieve a semblance of legitimacy and to quell potential political unrest.

Hale (2002) does not attribute these state concessions solely to the indigenous activism that has already taken place, and suggests that rather, states have preemptively granted indigenous reforms to ensure future stability in their relationship with indigenous groups, and further, to actually advance the neoliberal goals of the state. He proposes the concept of "neoliberal multiculturalism" in order to understand the apparent eagerness with which Latin American states have adopted discourses of interculturalism and diversity, and implemented limited indigenous cultural reforms. Through these practices, he argues, states have been able to incorporate relatively unthreatening demands that perhaps even facilitate the project of neoliberalism, while simultaneously delineating "acceptable" demands and forms of resistance versus those they deem unacceptable. Some examples of these acceptable demands would include formal recognition of indigenous groups, anti-discrimination legislation, the granting of limited responsibilities to local institutions, efforts to address indigenous people's exclusion from national politics, and, importantly for this paper, language and educational policy.

Hale contends that in the new millennium, the discourse of neoliberal multiculturalism has replaced that of *mestizaje*, which permeated previous centuries, and that this change maps onto the ideological shift from classic liberalism to neoliberalism. Liberal governance required the destruction of indigenous communities in order to incorporate the indigenous citizen into the burgeoning capitalist system, ultimately achieving the goal of a homogenous *mestizo* citizenry

through the process of modernization—and as Carter (2010) notes, this discourse in Chile was much more fixated on the "enlightening," civilizing example of the white European settlers than of indigenous influence in the *mestizaje*. In contrast, neoliberal states formally recognize indigenous communities, civil society, and culture in order to then "reconstitute them in its own image, sheering them of radical excess," and employ them "to do the work of subject-formation that otherwise would fall to the state itself" (Hale 2002). Out of this, Hale provides a framework for understanding how and why states engage with indigenous movements according to their underlying neoliberal ideology.

It is important to recognize how effective the state has been at circumscribing resistance to contain radical movements challenging the neoliberal order. In order to do this, the state will often reward groups who promote the "right" kinds of reforms with resources, while also denying concessions and even punishing those groups who advocate for reforms that "go too far." In the case of Chile, the state has drawn the line between acceptable and unacceptable demands and actions for achieving them: those deemed acceptable have been embraced through the CONADI (Chile's National Organization for Indigenous Development), while those deemed too radical are repressed and criminalized—most violently through the enforcement of Pinochet's still-existent *Ley Anti-Terrorista* (Park and Richards, 2007). The logic for determining which demands are acceptable, versus those that are not, aligns itself comfortably with corporate interests, as Carruthers and Rodriguez (2009) demonstrate. Their analysis of various case studies of Mapuche protests show that "when indigenous and environmental demands clashed with industrial and development interests, state agencies and policies perpetuated the Pinochet-era pattern of siding with private companies, against the expressed interests of indigenous communities, environmental experts and civil society more broadly."

Mapuche Cultural Revival

The discourse of indigenous culture revival circulating among Chilean and Latin American societies today ultimately come from indigenous movements, and as I argue, emerged as political demands, in contrast to what's been coopted and incorporated into neoliberal state reforms. In this section, I intend to retrace the history of the Mapuche movement in Chile in order to uncover the emergence of cultural concerns *as political ones*, and their evolution throughout the movement's development.

As discussed above, the Chilean liberal discourse of nationhood in the early 20th century propagated the ideology of modernization and homogenization that centered the civilizing force of the European settler, excluding that of the indigenous people whose land they had stolen. However, equitable integration of the Mapuche into Chilean society was precluded by the disproportionate exploitation and racist oppression experienced by the indigenous people who migrated to become a part of the urban working class; meanwhile, the continued encroachment of state-subsidized European settlements forced the rural Mapuche onto smaller and less fertile plots of land. Thus, the Mapuche were pushed into poverty and became increasingly disadvantaged in comparison to the rest of Chilean society. At this time, various Mapuche organizations emerged with the goal of advancing paternalist policies by the state to promote indigenous integration and development without challenging the underlying national ideologies of racial and cultural supremacy (Crow 2010; Carter 2010).

Approaching the mid-20th century, workers and peasant movements in Chile grew in militancy and organization, resulting in land and labor reforms by presidents Alessandri, Frei, and culminating under the Unidad Popular (UP) parliamentary coalition and Salvador Allende's presidency. During this time, Mapuche people organized alongside Chilean mestizo workers and

peasants, with their common experience of exploitation under capitalism and unequal land distribution forming the basis of their solidarity. Despite this successful alliance, which resulted in over 700,000 hectares of land expropriated in the name of Chilean and Mapuche peasants and posed a real threat to the capitalist system in Chile, many Mapuche organizers in both the traditional left parties and the extra-parliamentary left look back on this era critically (Carter 2010). Many explain this alliance as one in which the Left manipulated the Mapuche to achieve their own goals. Others allege that the Mapuche participated in an alliance with the Left in order to recover cultural space rather than because of their supposed class consciousness.

Contrary to these arguments made by some Mapuche intellectuals today, the Mapuche should not be seen as not having taken an active role in the building of revolutionary politics in Chile during this time. In her book *Courage Tastes of Blood,* Florencia Mallón tells the story of one rural Mapuche community's alliance with MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement), which forcibly expropriated 45 hectares of usurped reservation land and enjoyed a brief period of prosperity, farming the land collectively. Rosendo Heunuman, a Mapuche Marxist profiled in Carter's (2010) piece on Mapuche political history, became critical of the Communist Party of which he was part, arguing that the unique indignity suffered by the Mapuche people could not be explained by class repression alone. Today, Heunuman exhibits a "dual militancy" of commitment to both leftist and Mapuche ideals.

The left viewed "The Mapuche Question" as one purely of class, contending that once the contradictions of capitalism were overcome with the advent of socialism, racism and other forms of oppression on the basis of identity would fade away. The Mapuche undoubtedly experienced racism among the left, which was unwilling to seriously take into consideration the compounded forms of oppression faced by the Mapuche on account of their cultural indigeneity and colonial

dispossession, understood through Kimberle Crenshaw's seminal work on intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989).

Intersectionality is a framework for understanding the ways in which oppressions and exploitations converge to form a unique experience of marginalization under the system of capitalism. The framework gives insight into how racism and sexism are experienced compoundedly by women of color in the US, with the conclusion that no women's movement can hope to achieve women's liberation unless it speaks for women who also experience racism. Further, because economic inequality occurs along the lines of race and gender, any movement that wishes to fight against any of these injustices must take a stand against them all. While a way of dismantling these structures is not clearly laid out by Crenshaw, the framework has successfully been used to build politics of solidarity among people who experience various forms of oppression and exploitation. Unfortunately, and detrimentally, the international Left has all too often prioritized discussions of class and marginalized issues of identity oppression and colonial dispossession such as racism. Instead, anti-capitalists must acknowledge anti-indigenous racism and dispossession as unique and critical obstacles, requiring recognition and concerted efforts specifically towards their dismantling in order to confront the capitalist system as a whole.

During the time of the UP, however, the concept of a distinct "Mapuche identity," one that experienced uniquely compounded forms of oppression and exploitation, did not exist separately from that of Chilean mestizo peasants and workers as it does now, and this could explain why the question of race was never properly considered and dealt with among the organized left. As Reynaldo Mariqueo, also interviewed by Carter (2010), states, "There was no self-awareness as a 'people,' in the way that developed later on (or rather recovered) ... later, when Pinochet divided the communities under law 2568, the whole question of identity started to come up."

When the dictatorship took hold, the Mapuche were both among the most severely repressed and the staunchest resisters of the regime. As previously discussed, rather than treating the Mapuche as part of a larger group or class (working or peasant), the state began to treat the Mapuche as individuals, and social institutions benefiting Mapuche communities as well as the avenues for demanding collective rights were dismantled. This is when the Mapuche began to organize themselves around the basis of indigenous identity, which, according to Carter, "was reflected in the birth of new cultural organizations that simultaneously revived Mapuche culture and defended communities against Pinochet's land division policy."

As Isolde Reuque, Mapuche feminist, writes: "The Mapuche started to use "their own cultural practices to rebuild solidarity and pride… The *gillatun* [a Mapuche communal and thanksgiving ceremony], *palin* [a Mapuche athletic sport], the burial rites specific to each place—all events had a double meaning, both cultural and political. It helped us get in touch with our roots, and we said it loud and clear: our culture gives us pride and self-esteem… I think in times of great repression people look for ways to connect to each other and unify. When the repression was greatest, the Mapuche movement was strongest: with militant revivals of our language, our traditions, our traditional organizations."

The consolidation of the Mapuche under a shared cultural identity with a shared heritage of colonial dispossession and racial discrimination, and the conscious reawakening of cultural practices and institutions, can be understood as political acts of resistance against Pinochet's measures towards the atomization of all aspects of social, political, and economic life in Chile. The shift from Mapuche's demands for the right to material space to the right to cultural space can be understood as what Saavedra (2002) calls an "ethnic subculture of resistance."

Questioning cultural concerns

Given the way in which neoliberalism has been able to coopt demands oriented around indigenous identity and culture to achieve its own objectives, it is worth questioning the utility of such concepts as identity and inter-/multi-culturalism. Several intellectuals have put forth critiques of the very notions of identity and multiculturalism, viewing them ultimately as bourgeois precepts for the benefit of capital. Rouse (1995) contends that the promotion of multiculturalism pushes forward "the fragmentation of society into multiple identity groups with few perceived common interests, and a decline of cross-cultural class solidarity and struggle, which had greater transformative potential" (Hale 2002). Boccara (2006), although sympathetic to the Mapuche movement in Chile, similarly argues that the movement's emphasis on internal colonialism over class exploitation is the result of neoliberal globalization and its emphasis on cultural diversity and the "culturization of politics" in order to "disguise the real workings of capitalist accumulation."

These arguments must certainly be contended with, since they correctly identify the capitalist system as forming the material basis for the processes of colonialism, racism, and other forms of oppression and exploitation. Nevertheless, these claims closely echo the arguments many within the traditional Chilean left made when it came to the "Mapuche question," and which, I believe, are dismissive of the critiques and objections Mapuche activists have made of the left historically. The left's failure to see the unique oppression and exploitation of Mapuche people within a longer history of colonial dispossession and racist discrimination has often resulted in a class-reductionist analysis of the Mapuche situation, and that of indigenous people more broadly. The centralized Chilean government system, inherited from the legacy of Chilean colonialism, has neglected to identify the Mapuche as a uniquely oppressed and exploited group. As Mapuche political activist and educator Diego Ancalao Garaván argues, the current electoral system in Chile

does not represent the Mapuche, nor the poor, thus denying them the ability to determine their own futures. This fundamentally un-democratic system keeps the Mapuche people marginalized, oppressed, and poor.

Other scholars defend the usefulness of the concept of multiculturalism in resistance movements. David Theo Goldberg makes the distinction between the "managed multiculturalism" stemming from standard liberal ideology, which celebrates cultural pluralism without enacting lasting change for culturally oppressed groups, and the "transformative multiculturalism" emanating from grassroots movements, which calls for the redistribution of power and resources historically distributed unequally across lines of race, gender, etc.

The practice of neoliberal multiculturalism exemplifies how neoliberal states coopt popular demands and reorient them to advance the deepening of their atomizing and expansionary logic. However, rather than dismissing resistance movements that engage with the state and push for reforms, I agree with Hale (2002) and Park and Richards (2007) that to effectively confront neoliberal multiculturalism, social movements are needed which both address the problems of unequal cultural and political representation as well as the unequal distribution of resources necessitated by capitalism and deepened by neoliberalism.

Viewing state reforms that have taken place through this lens, I believe, is also useful for understanding the achievements and failures of Mapuche movements and alliances of the past and present, and for understanding the position that demands for cultural recognition and promotion should occupy within these movements. As Kowalczyk (2013) documents, operating within dominant realms of possibility always means facing the danger of being neutralized or coopted. Various Mapuche organizations, such as the Mapuche Nationalist Party, have adopted a rhetoric which uncritically accepts the ideologies of modernity and progress, which Kowalczyk warns

could easily turn into an "indigenous brand of neoliberalism" administered by Mapuche authorities. Hale also advises against romantic characterizations of indigenous movements as being inherently counter-hegemonic.

Alternatively, there is a necessary balance between completely rejecting the possibility of advancing the movement through engaging with the state, and conforming completely to the neoliberal status quo in the name of indigenous empowerment. Taking advantage of state resources to sow the seeds of dissent may ultimately be an important first step in challenging the hegemony built by neoliberal multiculturalism. Hale argues that indigenous movements should make the most of the opportunities provided by neoliberal multiculturalism, but warns that when they do, they will likely take place within the dominant bloc, "unless this decision forms part of a well-formed strategy oriented toward resistance from within, and ultimately, toward a well-conceived political alternative." As suggested by Hale and Parks and Richards, movements could occupy the spaces granted by the state from above, critically engaging with them and rejecting their inherently neoliberal logic, build solidarity with other groups with an interest in challenging the dominant order, and actually create a transformative movement towards a radical alternative.

Mapudungun Revitalization: top-down versus grassroots

I will now turn to two case studies of two different language revitalization efforts, one of which represents top-down state reforms and the other, an initiative by a grassroots organization. I will argue that while the materials and events promoted by the state tend to depoliticize the question of language revitalization by removing serious discussions of the material dispossession and repression experienced by the Mapuche, language revitalization efforts by grassroots Mapuche activists are often accompanied by de-colonial histories and aim to serve as an entry point to anti-neoliberal politics. I will focus on the initiatives and events described at the beginning of this paper,

the celebration of International Day of the Mother Language and UNESCO's International Year of Indigenous Languages, as an example of top-down state revitalization efforts, and juxtapose these to the repressive policies being implemented simultaneously towards the Mapuche. As an example of a grassroots organization working towards the revitalization and appreciation for Mapudungun, I will examine the online-based organization Kimeltuwe.

The Chilean State's Language Revitalization Efforts: *Día Internacional de la Lengua Materna* vs. *Plan Impulso Araucanía*

UNESCO has declared the year 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL). IYIL encourages the appreciation, protection, and promotion of the 2680 languages in danger of disappearing, most of which are spoken by indigenous people ("About IYIL 2019"). The declaration is expected to strengthen the measures being taken by organizations and institutions around the world that are dedicated to the protection and promotion of endangered languages. The UNESCO website detailing IYIL states that indigenous languages should be recognized "as a strategic national resource for development, peace building and reconciliation," and that they "add to the rich tapestry of global cultural diversity." The UNESCO statement encompasses the common practice by international organizations and nation-states of characterizing languages as commodities. As Monica Heller (2010) writes, the commodification of language treats languages both as technical skills, evident in UNESCO's use of terms like "national resource," and signs of authenticity, reflected by UNESCO's concern for "the rich tapestry of global cultural diversity." In this section, I will investigate how Chile's adoption of UNESCO's calls for language revitalization echo this commodification of language. I hope to concretize Chile's strategic promotion of neoliberal multiculturalism by counterposing an analysis of government statements

on indigenous language and culture revitalization with an examination of the recently-released *Plan Impulso Araucanía*.

The Chilean government has taken up UNESCO's call for action against the impending death of many of the world's indigenous languages. The state has sponsored a variety of programs for the promotion of indigenous languages and cultures, including events for the International Day of the Mother Language, which was first celebrated in 2011. Chile's Ministry of Culture, Art, and Heritage has spearheaded public events taking place on this day across the country, such as dramatic readings, arts and crafts workshops, language conferences, and public gatherings such as the one I described at the beginning of this paper. Many of these celebrations are planned and carried out on the local level with support from the government. Indigenous activists, educators, and academics all participate in the organizing and celebration of the event, and I in no way doubt their sincerity and dedication to the issue of indigenous language revitalization, and in most cases their solidarity with the Mapuche struggle. Rather, the argument I wish to make is that the promotion and celebration of culture emanating from the state, largely removed from the material, political underpinnings of the Mapuche movement, is the exact sort of application of multiculturalism we can come to expect from a state that remains committed to its project of neoliberalism.

Reports and articles on the *Día Internacional de la Lengua Materna* put out by the Government of Chile repeat the common notions that, as Southern Subdirector of CONADI Marcelo Huenchuñir puts it, "language is fundamental for the strengthening of the culture and identity of indigenous peoples," and that language "keeps ancestral traditions alive in a new, modern Chilean society" ("En Temuco CONADI…"; translated by the author). These sorts of

statements cast minority languages as tools that can be used towards the modernization and progress of the nation.

Further, government publicity for language revitalization skillfully strives to garner support for the current presidential administration's regressive policies toward the Mapuche such as its *Plan Impulso Araucanía,* which I will later discuss in more detail. Much of the state and mainstream media coverage released this year on the topic has remarked on how the state's support for language revitalization reflects president Sebastián Piñera's commitment to "fostering peace" with the Mapuche in the southern regions, while actions and policies toward the south threaten further repression.

An article on the Ministry of Culture, Art, and Heritage website, reporting on the Regional Plan for Indigenous Culture Revitalization, which quotes Margarita Ossa, a Regional Secretary of Culture, provides us with one example. Ossa states that "as part of the government program under President Sebastián Piñera in the area of culture, our purpose is to consistently recognize the history of our becoming, and promote the complete development of our society towards the future. In order to do this, it is fundamental that we promote culture and the arts; for they allow us to celebrate who we are, to recognize our history, to give meaning to what we do and to project our identity." The statement strongly advertises Piñera's supposed commitment to the promotion of Mapuche culture and heritage as part of a broader plan of development of the rural south.

Another article posted on CONADI's website discusses the Director of CONADI's visit to Punta Arenas, the southern-most region of Chile, to announce 2019 as a year dedicated to the promotion of language and culture. The article quotes Liz Casanueva, the Regional Social Development Secretary of Magallanes. Casanueva commends the visit, saying that it has represented a "faithful reflection of what our President, Sebastián Piñera, has mandated for us, to

be close to all constituents, to be close to our territory, and to be close to the people, thus showing that this meeting demonstrates a concern for the indigenous peoples" ("Director Nacional (s) de CONADI…"; translated by the author). The final paragraph of the article hastily mentions the duty of the government to "work with open doors, improve its relationship with its clients, attend to their demands and give answer to their requests." It remains unclear exactly which "clients" they refer to.

In all of these cases, government officials efficiently turn a purported commitment to the project of language revitalization through IYIL and *Día International de la Lengua Materna* into evidence that Piñera's policies toward the south will benefit the southern region and the indigenous people who inhabit it. However, Piñera's policies with regard to the Mapuche show an allegiance to corporate interests, and his message of peace therefore eerily echoes Chile's *Pacificación* policies of the early 20th century discussed earlier. Piñera is the first right-wing president of Chile since the fall of the Chilean dictatorship, and has been known to apologize for the actions of that regime ("Las polémicas frases…"; translated by the author). Piñera first assumed the presidency from 2010-2014, putting an end to the *Concertación*'s 20-year period of rule. His first term was both preceded and followed by president Michelle Bachelet, a member of the Chilean Socialist Party. Piñera again took office in 2018, having won the presidential election on a platform of national economic progress, and freedom and opportunity for all. He has also painted himself as a champion of law and order, especially when it comes to his politics toward the southern regions and the Mapuche people. While even the left-leaning Chilean political parties have accommodated and facilitated the nation's project of neoliberalism, Piñera plans to escalate development plans for the South, where the majority of the rural Mapuche population resides. It follows that the

administration threatens to intensify repression of any resistance toward this end—and this is exactly what Piñera's *Plan Impulso Araucanía* calls for.

In September of 2018, Piñera revealed his *Plan Impulso Araucanía* (PIA), which calls for the investment of $8 billion USD towards the development of the southern region. The plan places an emphasis on developing rural areas through projects including the building of schools and hospitals, the development of the tourism industry, and better access to drinking water. The plan also explicitly outlines the multiple ways it intends to address "terrorist" acts being carried out in the Southern region in the name of the Mapuche struggle. Through the PIA, Piñera plans to establish a Foundation for Reparations to Victims of Terrorism, most of whom are transnational corporations who have been the targets of eco-terrorist property damage. He also plans to increase security in the region to crack down on terrorist acts by updating the "infrastructure and modernization of the police force" through both intelligence and force. Finally, the PIA calls for the creation of a Council for Peace, where constituents including members of the farming and forestry industries, state actors, and the Mapuche, will sit down together for dialogue, with an understanding that acts of violence will not be tolerated. Piñera's general platform towards the Mapuche also nods toward his professed respect for Mapuche culture and demands. The plan promises to *consider* the organized and legal redistribution of land, constitutional recognition of the indigenous people of Chile, and the promotion of intercultural medicine, culture, language, and education of the Mapuche ("Plan Araucanía 2.0").

Piñera's plan has been criticized by Mapuche people, leftists, and political analysts for various reasons. The plan focuses primarily on increased surveillance, criminalization, and repression of Mapuche communities who engage in both peaceful and extreme forms of protest. The plan seeks to develop rural areas, and completely ignores the existence and needs of urban

Mapuche who make up over 70% of their total population, and who are twice as likely as the average Chilean to live in poverty. Diego Ancalao Galiván, Mapuche educator and political activist, criticizes the plan for its neglect of both the poverty of non-indigenous Chileans living in the South and the poverty of the Mapuche nation-wide. He writes that by only focusing on rural development, "they divide the Mapuche nation into the rural and the urban, taking away the validity of the conditions of the urban Mapuche. Thus, they promote the idea that the true Mapuche exists in the countryside, is poor, walks barefoot wearing a blanket, that is to say, the issue is transformed into a rural and agricultural one, discursively constructed to keep the cultural and historic strength of the Mapuche people from interfering with the epicenter of power, and thus, with the ideology that administers the political and economic model" (Ancalao Gariván 2018; translated by the author). The plan also scarcely mentions the central demand put forth by the Mapuche, which asks for increased access and rights to land that has been usurped by transnational corporations. PIA does not therefore even consider substantial reparations to the Mapuche. Critics have also raised skepticism towards Piñera's nods to cultural recognition and promotion, since the plan does not clarify whose voices will be privileged and how resources will be distributed to carry out this project (Palma 2018).

These examples represent only the most current mismatches between government discourse promoting interculturalism and diversity, and their repressive and neoliberal policies which back multinational corporate interests at the expense of the Mapuche. As I've discussed above, the lack of robust, critically-formulated programming for indigenous-led language revitalization indicates a half-hearted commitment to the project of language revitalization. However, it is even doubtful that providing these sorts of government programs with more funding and embracing a critical framework like Loncon suggests would be enough to successfully carry

out the project of revitalization. Instead, the Mapuche people must be provided the economic and political resources necessary to determine their own futures democratically, which will require a dismantling of Chile's neoliberal modes of operation. I will now turn to a grassroots, Mapuche-led initiative that explicitly politicizes the revitalization of Mapudungun, questioning Chile's colonial and neoliberal mode of governance.

Grassroots Language Revitalization Efforts: Kimeltuwe

One example of a grassroots organization that promotes the use and learning of Mapudungun is Kimeltuwe ("place of learning"), a small nonprofit organization founded in 2015 by Victor Carilaf Millaqueo, a Mapuche educator of Mapudungun, and Aldo Fiestóforo Berríos Castillo, an illustrator and student of Mapudungun. The project creates audio and visual learning materials for the teaching and learning of Mapudungun, which are distributed through online social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The materials they put out most frequently are small digital flyers intended to be shared via social media that include small and simple lessons on vocabulary and grammar. Each release focuses on a different element of Mapuche life and culture, and some are also turned into videos in which the content is spoken in Mapudungun with Spanish subtitles.

The project has put out several workbooks designed for use in the classroom by early childhood and elementary educators, as well as a translation in Mapudungun of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. They also frequently publish blogposts for their adult readership that include short stories, op-eds, histories, and summaries of scholarship on the Mapudungun language. The majority of the content published on the blog is written in Mapudungun, with much of it including side-by-side translations in Spanish. Thus, Kimeltuwe's mission is to make the learning of Mapudungun fun, intellectually stimulating, and accessible to both children and adults.

The project has gained quite a bit of traction online, with over 180,500 likes on Facebook and over 20,000 followers on Instagram, including both Mapuche and mestizo Chilean users.

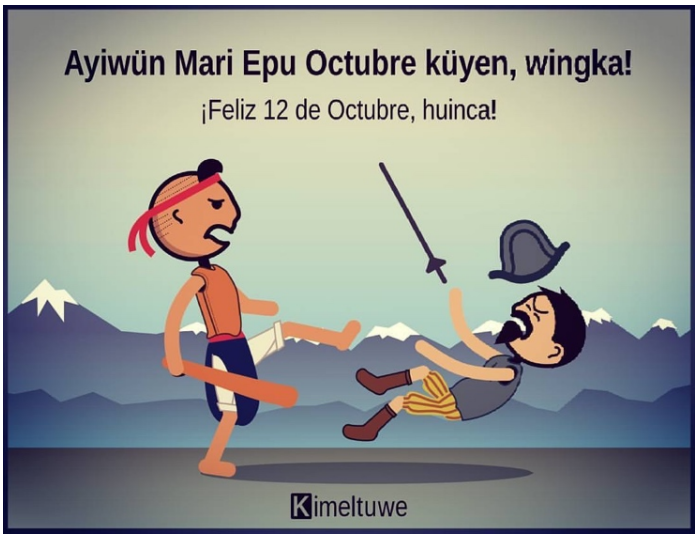
Crucially, Kimeltuwe does not shy away from politicizing their project and creating content prioritizing Mapuche perspectives on history and worldview, a fact which becomes clear in an interview with the founders published in *Mapun Kimün* (Becerra Parra 2017). The organization regularly participates in peaceful marches for a variety of issues, such as Day of the Teacher, International Day of the Mother Language, against the oppression of women, and for the liberation of Mapuche political prisoners. The de-colonial nature of their project is apparent in each of the materials released by Kimeltuwe, even on the level of language pedagogy and translation. The materials they release are not simply translations for Spanish phrases or concepts, but attempt to introduce the language through lessons on Mapuche culture and worldview. Kimeltuwe has released materials on concepts as mundane as Mapuche measurements systems, clothing, and musical instruments, and as complex as how the Mapuche tell the history of their people, how they locate themselves geographically, and how they view time and space. Thus, the project consistently emphasizes taking Mapudungun and Mapuche perspectives as the point of departure.

One of Kimeltuwe's most popular materials is a calendar which revolves around the *We Tripantu*, The Mapuche New Year, celebrated in late June. The calendar includes Mapuche holidays and various important dates in Mapuche history, which the founders of Kimeltuwe have noted "open up connections to territorial references and connect to a concept of Mapuche history. They could even be understood as a reconstruction of Mapuche history" (Becerra Parra 2017; this and the following quotations translated by the author). Much of their material has focused on historical variation of elements of Mapuche culture across time, rejecting the idea that Mapuche culture exists only in a static past. Instead, they emphasize that Mapuche people exist in the present

as part of a dynamic culture that continues to evolve. For example, one of their releases included Mapuche dress throughout history. Kimeltuwe also releases content about neologisms, with words like *mütrümwe* (cellphone) and *eñümiyaelwe* (microwave), and explains how to coin new words in Mapudungun using productive morphemes, compounds, loan words, and semantic loans.

Kimeltuwe also plays with visual representation to question Western ideologies and conventions. For example, the maps they use for geographic visualizations position the Pacific Ocean at the top of the page, reflecting their own self-orientation while defying the conventions of Western cartography. These materials also reject the borders of the modern nation-states of Chile and Argentina, affirming that the Mapuche people have historically and continue to live across the Andes Mountains regardless of the division. Carilaf asks, "Is it not known that [this] is a very recent division? And that the Mapuche were here long before that, long before Chile and Argentina existed, even before the concept of nations existed. That division between Chile and Argentina did not exist in this territory, that is a brutal de-consciousness" (Becerra Parra 2017).

Although Kimeltuwe's materials are accessible and intended not just for Mapuche learners, but for mestizo Chileans as well, the creators do not shy away from topics that might, in their words, "shake up the world view of someone who is Chilean and who has never looked at things from a different perspective… the drawings aren't propaganda, but they are political, that is to say, they are grounded/contextualized" (Becerra Parra 2017). Kimeltuwe caused controversy among their followers on the 12th of October, the day recognized as Indigenous Resistance Day in Chile, when they released an image of a Mapuche man kicking off a Spanish conquistador with the caption "*Ayiwün Mari Epu Octubre küyen, wingka!*" ("Happy 12th of October, outsider/thief"), centralizing the history of colonization that continues to be a reality for the Mapuche people, albeit in a different form.



Kimeltuwe's October 12th digital flyer, picturing a Mapuche person kicking off a Spanish conquistador

The founders are thus conscious of, and project to their readership, the linkage between colonialism, racism, and Mapudungun language attrition. Berríos: "Sometimes people are interested in Mapudungun but at first they are unaware of the historical process that Mapuche culture has gone through, including what it's suffering now. Sometimes these things are seen as outside of space and time, and people may say things like 'Why don't the Mapuche write books?', 'Why don't the Mapuche speak their language, they should just stand up and speak it,' and they don't see the historical process that's occurring…One might sincerely ask, why don't they do this or that, but effectively there exists a colonial and discriminatory context which makes it much more difficult for some than for others" (Becerra Parra 2017). By situating the education and learning of Mapudungun within an explicitly political framework, the founders address the political nature of Mapudungun's threat of disappearance, and indicate that this type of politicization is necessary for the project of revitalization to succeed.

Conclusions

The modern Mapuche movement first began to form in resistance to the Pinochet

dictatorship. After Chile's transition to democracy, the movement arose as a sector which militantly challenged the *Concertación*'s adherence to the neoliberal order. Many factors contributed to the emergence of this movement. The Mapuche had experienced racialized oppression since the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors to the Southern Cone. However, the dictatorship's neoliberal policies perpetuated and hastened their dispossession of lands in the interest of transnational corporations. The regime's rhetoric and policies toward the Mapuche, including the still-active *Ley Anti-terrorista*, painted them as a minority group demanding special treatment, and established the image of the Mapuche as violent terrorists who threaten Chile's national security. The construction of a "Mapuche identity" as it exists today, through reviving cultural beliefs and practices, including the speaking of Mapudungun, helped to forge a basis for solidarity through which they could begin to fight against the unique forms of oppression and exploitation they faced as a group. The Mapuche movement has put forth both material and cultural demands, with the recognition that their loss of land has also threatened the survival of their culture, language, and knowledge.

Since the return to democracy, the Chilean state has strategically taken up these cultural demands on a superficial level, ignoring more substantial material demands for land redistribution and political autonomy, which I, following Hale, identify as a practice of neoliberal multiculturalism. Policies and rhetoric supporting indigenous cultures, such as the promotion of Mapudungun revitalization, have not been robust, have suffered from top-down organization and implementation, and sharply contrast with Chile's repressive practices of protest suppression and police brutality targeting the Mapuche population, especially in the south of Chile. Most recently under Piñera, apolitical celebrations of Mapuche language and culture have efficiently been utilized as propaganda for the administration's plans to further militarize regions with high

populations of Mapuche people.

Alternately, many grassroots revitalization efforts, such as that of Kimeltuwe, emphasize the necessity of politicizing the question of Mapudungun revitalization. In this way, language loss is acknowledged as arising directly out the process of material dispossession. This opens the way for the project of language revitalization to also be a political project challenging anti-indigenous racism and the systemic oppression and exploitation of indigenous peoples through colonialism and neoliberalism.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

During the spring of 2018, when I was studying in Valparaíso, I attended a small workshop class called *Taller de Cosmovisión Mapuche* (Mapuche Worldview Workshop) at a local community center. The class was taught by an 80-or-so-year-old Mapuche woman whom we called Ñaña, a word used to refer to people affectionately in Mapudungun. Ñaña is a Mapuche Pehuenche, which is the name of the group of Mapuche people who live in Chile's central valley. The class was attended by five or six people, most of whom were mestizo Chileans with leftist politics and an interest in learning about indigenous culture, language, history, and struggles. Over the course of four months, the *taller* met every Saturday, formally from the hours of 11AM - 1PM, but we'd often stay until 4 or 5 PM drinking *mate* and talking. We learned about Mapuche herbal medicine, learned words and phrases and songs in Mapudungun, and, although Ñaña never deemed us fully "ready" for it, began to talk about Mapuche worldview—how the Mapuche view themselves in connection to the land they have lived on for thousands of years. We would cook elaborate *almuerzos* of fish from the port, potatoes, and fresh home-made bread in the outdoor brick firewood oven. At the very end of the course, we celebrated *We Tripantu* (Mapuche New Year) with the broader Mapuche community and allies in the region, where we cooked a celebratory feast, prayed for the political prisoners and the organizers struggling in the south, and went swimming in the Pacific Ocean just before dawn to signify cleansing and rebirth, as is customary for the celebration.

This *taller* was one of many taught across Chile by local activists who wish to foster an appreciation for the Mapuche culture which has been stigmatized and repressed for so many centuries. I look back on the experience I had in the class with fond memories and deep gratitude for all that I learned, and for the relationships I built through this small community. But I have also

wondered about the value of this sort of class within a broader context of language loss as a result of material dispossession. While the class was never removed from politics—we would often discuss the struggles going on in the south of Chile—many of my classmates fixated on the adoption of Mapuche culture and language as a political act in and of itself. They would talk about the learning and use of Mapudungun and the incorporation of Mapuche worldviews and medicinal practices as if the project of revitalization were a lifestyle task—that is, to be committed to as individuals and incorporated into an otherwise mainstream Chilean life as a symbolic gesture of resistance. Mapuche cultural revitalization has been an important vehicle for radical political organizing, especially under the repressive Pinochet regime, because of its seemingly benign character. But I question whether culture and language revitalization should be seen as ends in themselves.

Hale's concept of neoliberal multiculturalism describes what happens to elements of a culture when they are stripped of the social relations from which they organically arose, and are commodified to facilitate the expansion and deepening of the system of capitalism. Language and cultural revitalization projects, as I've argued in this paper, have historically served as vehicles for radical political organizing. But if they lose sight of the material processes underlying the death of traditional ways of life, resistance movements that emphasize cultural concerns face the danger of demobilization, and can even begin to fetishize elements of a culture— especially if what's being revitalized is in effect already dead. After all, if an endangered language atrophies to the point where it is no longer spoken natively, it loses much of its complexity, and ceases to become an organic, heterogeneous, and dynamic form of communication. And once this has occurred, revitalization of the language will be an artificial process— the language being revitalized can be nothing more than a static and homogenous reconstruction of what used to be a socially and

culturally-embedded form of communication, embodying the ever-changing knowledge and worldview of a people.

As UNESCO's Expert Group on Endangered Languages expressed in 2003, "Language diversity is essential to the human heritage. Each and every language embodies the unique cultural wisdom of a people. The loss of any language is thus a loss for all humanity." Languages constantly undergo contact and shift, and this has been the case since language first evolved. But certainly, the fact that thousands of languages are currently endangered or have recently gone extinct is alarming. And the true tragedies underlying this all are the violent processes of colonial dispossession, capitalist exploitation, and racial oppression, through which the cultures and languages of marginalized people have been devalued, discriminated against, and outright forbidden and repressed. In Chile, whereas indigenous languages and cultures were once stigmatized and suppressed by the state in favor of a homogenous European-enlightened mestizo race for the purpose of nation building and capitalist development, a discourse of inter-culturalism and diversity has now displayed a semblance of reckoning for past injustices, while the violence of colonial encroachment and repression continues through the system of neoliberalism.

This paper has critiqued the Chilean state's discourse and policies toward interculturalism and linguistic diversity, including indigenous language revitalization, on two planes. I have firstly, along the lines of Loncon and Gallegos, identified the problems plaguing state revitalization initiatives—including its top-down organization and implementation, and its failure to recognize the positively political nature of language revitalization, which will require challenging the systems of colonialism and racism underlying the devaluation of indigenous languages. Beyond this, I have identified the state's discourse toward indigenous interculturalism as an example of neoliberal multiculturalism. Through this strategy, cultural demands put forth by indigenous

movements are coopted—while material demands for greater democracy and collective land rights are ignored—in order to advance the state's project of neoliberalism.

Each element of the contradiction I laid out at the beginning of the paper—the state's simultaneous celebration of indigenous culture and repression of the Mapuche movement in the South—can be understood as the two sides of Chilean neoliberalism's search for hegemony as Gramsci theorizes it (Gramsci 1999). Neoliberal multiculturalism garners consent for the state's concern for multinational ventures over the lives of those they displace and the environment exploited in their wake. They do this by coopting "acceptable" cultural demands, drawing hard limits for what indigenous movements can and cannot ask for, and dictating how they can and cannot go about asking for these things. The increased militarization and surveillance of Mapuche communities in the south, giving rise to increased instances of police brutality, constitutes the coercive element of this hegemony. In this light, it is questionable that a state-led project of language revitalization for the purposes of advancing the project of neoliberalism, rather than to challenge the systems of racism and both material and cultural dispossession for which this project is responsible, will be successful—let alone that it will advance justice for the Mapuche.

As Paolo Freire writes, there is no such thing as an educational program removed from and neutral to politics. "To try to get people to believe that there is such a thing as this, and to convince or try to convince the incautious that this is the truth, is indisputably a political practice, whereby an effort is made to soften any possible rebelliousness on the part of those to whom injustice is being done. It is as political as any other practice, which does not conceal—in fact, which proclaims—its own political character" (Freire 1994). While outwardly apolitical, the Chilean state's revitalization program not only rests comfortably within the confines of the neoliberal order

in Chile, but is actually employed to assist the progress of neoliberal development. This has done nothing but exacerbate the conditions under which indigenous communities cannot thrive.

In order for the project of Mapudungun language revitalization to be successful, it must embrace its inherently political nature, as Loncon suggests. It must be informed by the real-world conditions the Mapuche find themselves in, to then directly confront and challenge the systems of colonialism and racism which underlie language attrition. The value of explicitly political language and cultural revitalization projects lies in their ability to challenge the systems of exploitation and oppression underlying language and cultural loss among indigenous peoples. Until indigenous demands for democracy and material reparations are met, celebrations for indigenous languages like the one I describe at the beginning of my paper will remain purely symbolic.

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